(b) Reasons for low literacy include:—

* Gender Based Inequality,
* Social Discrimination,
* Child Labour,
* Poor-Economic Status,
* Pre-occupation with household chores, and
* Lack of awareness about relevance of Education.

(c) and (d) In the Elementary Education Sector, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has been launched with a holistic and convergent approach to implement Universalisation of Elementary Education in a mission mode with the district focus. The goals of SSA are:—

* All children in School, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, 'Back-to-School' camp by 2003.
* All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
* All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010.
* Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
* Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.
* Universal retention by 2010.

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) aims to provide functional literacy to non-literates in 15-35 age group. The thrust areas of NLM are improving female literacy in low female literacy areas, to organize residual illiteracy projects in areas which have substantial number of illiterates and to set up continuing education centres for providing opportunities for life long learning to the neo-literates.

Expenditure on Education

1231. SHRI M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government in its educational agenda stands committed to the promise of spending 6 per cent of the GD.R on education;

(b) if so, whether steps have already been initiated in all seriousness to implement this commitment;

(c) whether Government for the present intends to replace "education" with "literacy" and pursue total literacy programmes only like "SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN";

(d) whether the "SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN" scheme has really reached out so as to beneficially cover all the poor and deprived section of society; and

(e) if so, the appraisal of its performance so far, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a). and (b) The Common Minimum Progamme of the Government pledges to raise public spending in education to at least 6% of GDP with at least half of this amount being spent on primary and secondary sectors. This will be done in a phased manner.

(c) and (e) Serva Shiksha Abhiyan is not a literacy programme but a National Programme for elementary education in partnership with the States, covering children in age group of 6-14 years. The Government of India has approved the Annual Work Plans of 597 districts of 33 States/UTs for implementation of SSA in 2004-2005. The Programme is being implemented by the States/UTs satisfactorily.

Universal Elementary Education

1232. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that not much progress has been made in achieving universal elementary education since the amended statute became effective;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) will be setting soft credit support of US dollar 550 million from the World Bank to meet part of the scheme cost of US dollar 3.5 billion,

(c) if so, the details thereof; and